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LETTER DATED 5 MARCH 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ZAMBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On 28 February 1999, the Chief Government Spokesman and Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services, Newstead L. Zimba, issued a press statement following some acts of terrorism which were carried out in the Zambian capital, Lusaka, where 14 bombs were planted and exploded at various locations by enemies of the peace which Zambia enjoys.

I now take the liberty to attach the press statement and request that it be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Peter L. KASANDA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Press statement issued by the Chief Government Spokesman and Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services of Zambia on 28 February 1999

Early this morning, at about 0100 hours, Zambia experienced the first in a series of bomb blasts. The blast was as a result of five bombs placed one on each leg of a Zesco pylon of the high-tension lines from Kafue to Lusaka City; the fifth bomb was placed 2 metres away from the pylon. The bombs were detonated simultaneously and blew up the pylon. The second blast occurred at about 0130 hours, from a bomb placed outside the wall fence of a block of flats at the junction of Bwinjimfumu and Great East roads.

At the same time, another bomb went off in the Mapepe area of Chilanga, which blew up the main water pipe from Kafue to Lusaka. At about 0907 hours, police bomb disposal experts detonated the second bomb, which had been placed near the bomb that had exploded at the Bwinjimfumu and Great East roads site.

The fourth explosion was at 1200 hours at the premises housing the Angolan Embassy. The bomb exploded in a room on the first floor of the Chancery building, resulting in the death of one Angolan security officer and the injury of another. Both security officers are Angolan nationals. This loss of life is most regrettable.

The fifth explosion occurred at 1600 hours and was as a result of a bomb placed in a culvert in the proximity of the north-end flyover bridge.

The last blast was a controlled explosion of four bombs that had been placed below a pylon next to the pylon blown up at 0100 hours in Lusaka East. There have therefore been 13 bombs known to have been planted and exploded, plus one at the Angolan Embassy. The bomb experts have confirmed that all 14 bombs are of the same type.

As a result of this obviously unstable security situation, the Government wishes to condemn in unequivocal terms these acts of terrorism aimed at destabilizing the peace the Zambian people have always cherished. Acts of terror will be met with the sternest action. We will leave no stone unturned in bringing to account the people behind these acts of terror, whether foreign or local. To this end, we have invited the Government of the United States of America to provide expert assistance in the investigations of these acts of terror. We will leave the door open to other countries of goodwill to send in experts to help our security agencies in these investigations.

Zambia has always been and will want to continue to be an island of peace. We have made sacrifices for the peace of the southern African region and Africa as a whole, and our role has always been that of bridge-builders. This is the role we cherish and this is the role we will continue to play.

Zambia is now faced with acts of aggression. It is the duty of every Zambian to defend our country, and the Government wishes to appeal to every

Zambian to remain extra-vigilant. I appeal to all of you to cooperate fully with the security forces that have been tasked not only with ensuring continued peace, but also with investigating and bringing to book the messengers of death who seek to spill the blood of innocent Zambians.

As from tonight, orders have been issued that will result in certain security precautions being implemented. The Zambian people are once again being called upon to cooperate with the security forces. Until further notice, Zambians are urged to stay, to the greatest extent possible, away from the streets during hours of darkness. This appeal is not intended to inconvenience you but to protect you. I want to warn the nation to prepare for any eventuality. Let me reassure you, however, that the Government will not let you down.